

Bitterroot AUDUBON



FEBRUARY 2009

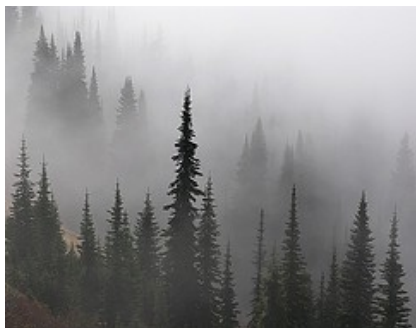
NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 23 NO. 6

History of Bitterroot Forestland: Fires & Vegetative Changes

The Bitterroot Audubon Society knows how crucial our forests are to people and wildlife, especially birds. On Monday, February 16th, the BAS will have the opportunity to learn from a veteran Forest Ecologist and longtime forest historian, Jack Losensky, what factors are key in managing the forests. He has spent his career studying natural vegetative structure and the influence of fire in forming it. Although he is now retired, he has continued to work with various government agencies in developing appropriate management strategies for the Forest-Urban Interface. Jack points out that “to understand the problems we face in managing our forestland, we must first understand the strategies our native plants have developed to survive the impact of fire over the past 12,000 years.” Early photographs taken in the Bitterroot Valley demonstrate vegetative conditions at the time of Euro-American settlement. Jack will compare those to repeat photos, taken since settlement, which show the vegetative changes that have occurred. Reasons for these changes will be explored and necessary actions needed to return to more natural vegetation will be presented. Fred Weisbecker, President of the Bitterroot Audubon, has said, “*Once you hear this program and see these pictures, you will never look at the forests in the same way again.*”

Join us at 7:00 PM, February 16th, at the Lee Metcalf Refuge north of Stevensville. The public is invited. For further information or directions, contact Kay Fulton at 642-3794.



Great Backyard Bird Count

On Presidents Day Weekend, February 13-16, join thousands of other birders around the country and count the birds you see in your own backyard. Then report your tally online to add to our store of avian knowledge. It's simple, it's enjoyable, and it's worthwhile.

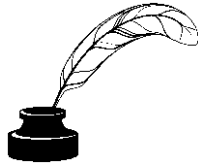
1. Visit www.birdcount.org for easy-to-follow instructions, including tips for identifying bird species. Download a checklist for your area.
2. Count the birds you see, wherever you choose to count, and write down the highest number of individuals you see at any one time – that way you'll avoid counting any bird twice.
3. After at least 15 minutes of watching in one place (you can spend more time observing if you prefer), report your results online at www.birdcount.org.
4. You can repeat your count at the same place on each day of the Great Backyard Bird Count. You can also visit other locations and submit separate tallies for those areas as well.
5. You can view your results. Online maps and lists are updated throughout the count, making it easy to see how your birds fit into the big picture. Speaking of pictures, you can submit your digital images of birds or of GBBC participants for the online gallery and photo contest.



Last year, participants counted over nine million birds and reported 12 species never before reported during the GBBC! Let's see how many we can count this year, and find out together how bird populations may be changing.

Letter from the President

by Fred Weisbecker



I know we humans have always found bird migration amazing but a new scientific study has really brought home how phenomenal it can be. Researchers have recently tracked the bar-tailed godwit on their 7,242 mile nonstop flight from Alaska to New Zealand without stopping to eat, sleep, or rest that took 9 days and nights. The scientists banded twenty three birds with satellite trackers to study this amazing feat. One bird studied burned off half of its 1.5 pound beginning weight. It was determined that during their flight the birds were operating at 10 times their normal resting metabolic rate. The peak rate for humans in some extreme athletic pursuits is about 6 times basal metabolism the report added. Stories like this help to remind us how complex the natural world is and why we need to continue to advocate for birds and their habitats. Audubon has been doing this since the days of convincing the public that feathers in ladies' hats were decimating rookeries of herons and egrets along our southern coasts. As we humans continue to develop and alter our world, birds face many challenges on their migration routes. Hopefully Audubon will be at the forefront, monitoring these potential obstacles and educating the public on behalf of the birds.

CHEMICAL POLLUTANTS HAVE SERIOUS EFFECTS ON BIRDS

by Judy Hoy

A new CHEM Trust report by Gwenne Lyons, containing information and studies concerning the effects of environmental pollutants on vertebrates, includes many interesting and relatively recent studies of damaging hormonal effects on birds and mammals. Bird lovers will find the section on birds especially informative. The report, entitled "*Effects of Pollutants on the Reproductive Health of Male Vertebrate Wildlife - Males Under Threat*," can be viewed or downloaded free at www.chemtrust.org.uk. The study of male genitalia on White-tailed Deer, Sitka Black-tailed Deer and Eland on page 31 may be of special interest to owners of grazing animals and to hunters. The effects of pollutants on the human male reproductive system are now recognized by many top scientists as a greater threat to human survival than global climate change. It is my opinion that people who love birds and other wildlife, and/or who want their children and

grandchildren to have a future, should be working hard to mitigate the effects of both hormone disruption and global warming. Working together, the combined efforts of the Audubon Society members can have a significant positive effect and greatly influence others.

California Quail Sightings Wanted

Populations of California Quail in our Valley have increased dramatically over the past few years, as indicated by Hamilton and Stevi Christmas Bird Count results. Native to scrubby parts of the western U.S., but not to Montana, quail in the Bitterroot were originally released by hunting clubs, but many have apparently escaped and started reproducing on their own. **We need your help** to get a better idea of how many California Quail we have in the Bitterroot, where they are and whether they're reproducing successfully. If you have a covey on your property, or know where one exists, please notify Dave Lockman at 777-7426 (day) or 777-2929 (night), or dlockman@fs.fed.us. Please include: 1. your name and contact info; 2. location where you see quail coveys; 3. number of quail in covey; 4. evidence of reproduction (chicks, eggs, etc.); 5. time of year you see quail; 6. how long you've been seeing quail there, and any trends in numbers over that time. You might also include names and contact info for other people you know that have quail, but aren't likely to see this request.



FWP SEEKING COMMENTS RE FALCONS

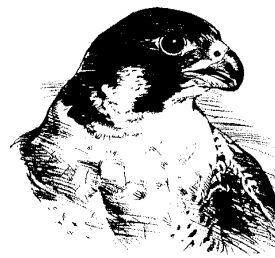
The Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks Commission is seeking comment on a recently approved tentative regulation allowing up to 5 peregrine falcons to be taken for falconry this year.

Only Montana residents currently licensed as general or master falconers could apply for this limited

opportunity to take a wild peregrine falcon. For details, go to fwp.mt.gov and look under "Public Notices."

Written comments may be sent to FWP Wildlife Division, Attn: Public Comment, PO

Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701, or emailed to fwpwild@mt.gov. Comments must be received by February 16th.

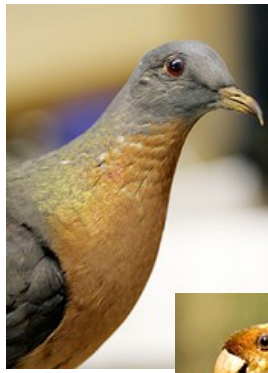


What's the Story, Story?

by Jim Story

Question: Why did the Passenger Pigeon go extinct in the U.S.?

Answer: The Passenger Pigeon may have once been the most abundant bird on the planet. Occurring in the once great deciduous forests of the eastern U.S., single flocks were estimated to contain several billion birds. Most of the population collapse was due to heavy harvest by hunters. The Carolina Parakeet was another abundant bird that occurred in the same area as the passenger pigeon and disappeared at about the same time. Although a beautiful bird, the parakeet was an agricultural pest, which resulted in heavy slaughter by farmers. Habitat destruction and competition with introduced honey bees



for nests holes may have contributed to the parakeet's demise. However, fairly large numbers of both bird species still occurred in their waning years and some habitat still existed, so why did they go extinct? The final end to both the Passenger Pigeon and the Carolina Parakeet populations may have

occurred when they became too scarce to form large social groups that were essential to their survival. The last survivor of both species died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914.

Remember that you can have your burning ornithological questions answered by our resident expert. Either send an email to Jim at JStory@cybernet1.com or call him at 961-4689.

BACKYARD BIRDS

compiled by Wayne Tree



Hamilton Area

John Ormiston	Evening Grosbeak
Barb Ormiston	California Quail
Elizabeth Chilcote	Rough-legged Hawk
Kathy Daniels	Northern Flicker
Mike Daniels	Song Sparrow
Aislinn Daniels	Northern Flicker
Barry Abel	Bald Eagle
Shirley Abel	
Claude Birkeneder	Brown Creeper
Audrey Hobbs	White-breasted Nuthatch
Ree van Oppen	American Robins
Peter Allen	Downy Woodpecker
Helen Allen	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Leslie Robinson	Bald Eagle
Patricia Ryan-Swindler	American Goldfinches
Skye O'Byrne	California Quail
Colleen Powell	Blue Jay
L.M. Powell	Northern Flickers
Ted Troutman	Downy Woodpecker
Dorinda Troutman	Song Sparrow
Pat Bartholomew	Black-capped Chickadee
Bart Bartholomew	Red-shafted Flicker
Veryl Kosteczko	Mourning Doves (20)
Bart Hoag	Pileated Woodpecker
Barb Hoag	Bald Eagle

Peg Platt
Sue Case
Doug Case
Samantha O'Byrne
Steve Elie
Jim Story
Marleen Story
Marie McKee

Stevensville Area

Molly Hackett
Jim Davies
Sharon Browder
Dan Browder
Kevin Browder
Lindsay Browder
Doris Roberts
Betsy Douglas
Kay Fulton
Carol Santos (adult)
Johnny Santos
Judy Hoy
Bob Hoy
Marvin Costello
Mary Costello
Sherry Ritter
Lynn Moshier
Gail Mosher
Joe Birkeneder
Marty Birkeneder
Patty Laughlin
Mimi Sauer
Len Sauer
Mike Williams
David Calkins

Red Crossbills
Common Redpoll
Hairy Woodpecker
Mountain Chickadee
Bald Eagle
Great Horned Owl
California Quail
House Finch ♂

Red Crossbills
Gray Partridge
Mourning Dove
Steller's Jay
American Robin
Bald Eagle
White-breasted Nuthatch
Red-tailed Hawk
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Goshawk

Pileated Woodpecker
Rough-legged Hawk
Great Horned Owl
Bald Eagle
Red-shafted Flicker
Bald Eagle
Black-billed Magpies
Black-capped Chickadees
Red-shafted Flicker
Steller's Jay
Great Horned Owl
Common Merganser (8)
Song Sparrow
Common Ravens
Bald Eagle
Patti Calkins

American Robin
Jeanne Tischler
Jerry Tischler
Wayne Tree
Arla Tree
Paul Hayes
Mary Hayes
Jim Hamilton
Dave Lockman
Blakey Lockman
Daniel Lockman
Jenna Lockman
Grey Nenow
Minta Nenow
Mary Gum
Chris Thompson
Kate Davis
Michael Koeppen
Lynn Koeppen
Jean Osterheld
Al Hinman
Hazel Hinman
Dale Dufour

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Bald Eagle (overhead)
Pine Grosbeaks
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Hairy Woodpecker
Gray Partridge
White-breasted Nuthatch
Hairy Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Mourning Dove
Evening Grosbeaks
Red Crossbills
Great Horned Owl
Downy Woodpecker
Northern Harrier
Clark's Nutcracker
Pygmy Nuthatch
Hairy Woodpecker
Bohemian Waxwing
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Bohemian Waxwing

